

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Original) A method of removing an obstruction from a blood vessel, comprising the steps of:
 - providing an obstruction removing element which is movable from a collapsed position to an expanded position, the obstruction removing element having a wire which has a distal end coupled to an insertion element, the wire also having a proximal end which is slidable on the insertion element;
 - positioning the obstruction removing element in a catheter with the obstruction removing element in the collapsed position;
 - advancing the catheter through the obstruction;
 - moving the obstruction engaging element out of the catheter after the advancing step so that the obstruction removing element moves toward the expanded position; and
 - engaging the obstruction by moving the obstruction engaging element after the advancing step.
2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein:
 - the providing step is carried out with a stop coupled to the insertion element, the stop preventing distal advancement of the proximal end.
3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein:
 - the advancing step is carried out with the obstruction removing element wrapped around the insertion element during the advancing step.

Claims 4-116 (Canceled)

117. (New) A method of removing an obstruction from a blood vessel, comprising the steps of:

providing an obstruction removing element which is movable from a collapsed position to an expanded position, the obstruction removing element also having a proximal portion and means for stopping distal advancement of the proximal portion of the element to prevent expansion of the obstruction engaging element beyond the expanded position, the preventing means being coupled to the proximal portion of the element;

advancing the obstruction removing element into the obstruction with the obstruction removing element in the collapsed position;

permitting the obstruction removing element to move toward the expanded shape after the advancing step; and

moving the obstruction removing element proximally to engage the obstruction, the preventing means preventing distal displacement of the proximal portion of the element relative to the insertion element when the obstruction removing element is moved proximally.

118. (New) The method of claim 117, wherein:

the providing step is carried out with the element including a helical coil coupled to an insertion element.

119. (New) The method of claim 117, wherein:

the providing step is carried out with the preventing means including a stop on the insertion element, the proximal end of the helical coil being distally slidable on the insertion element until contacting the stop.

120. (New) The method of claim 117, further comprising:
providing a catheter;
advancing the catheter into the obstruction; and
positioning the obstruction removing element in the catheter; and
the permitting step being carried out by moving at least one of the catheter
and obstruction removing element after the advancing step.